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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA; NEA/PA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN,  
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SUBJECT: JORDANIAN PUBLIC AND MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT BUSH'S  
RE-ELECTION

1. OUTSIDE RULING CIRCLES, POST'S JORDANIAN CONTACTS REACTED WITH SUBDUED EMOTIONS TO THE RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BUSH. MOST REMAIN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF U.S. POLICIES TOWARDS THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND IRAQ, BUT DOUBT THAT A KERRY ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE PURSUED SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT POLICIES. SEVERAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT, AND ONE UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR SAID HE BELIEVES THE U.S. WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE "AGGRESSIVE" POLICIES, ESPECIALLY IN IRAQ.

2. MOST JORDANIAN PRESS COMMENTATORS DECRIED THE BUSH REELECTION AS THE REINFORCEMENT OF A "UNILATERALIST", OR "CHRISTIAN-RIGHT" DIRECTION IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. SOME CYNICS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WELCOMED THE BUSH VICTORY WHICH, ACCORDING TO THEM, WOULD ALIENATE U.S. ALLIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AND EVENTUALLY CREATE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE THAT WOULD CHANGE THE U.S. COURSE. BUT OTHER PRESS COMMENTATORS SAID THAT THEY HAD BEEN HOPING FOR A KERRY VICTORY IN ORDER TO PUNISH PRESIDENT BUSH "FOR HIS POLICIES REGARDING IRAQ AND THE PALESTINIANS."

3. SENIOR OFFICIALS WITHIN THE GOJ AND THE PALACE, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE PLEASED WITH THE ELECTION RESULTS, AS WERE MANY REGIME STALWARTS, WHO VIEW THE U.S. RELATIONSHIP AS ESSENTIAL TO JORDAN'S STABILITY. SENATE PRESIDENT ZAID RIFAI, FOR EXAMPLE, EXPRESSED HIS SATISFACTION TO CHARGE WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION.

4. FOLLOWING ARE SOME REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES OF EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES ON THE RE-ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BUSH

-- A LETTER THAT WILL NOT BE READ BY THE WINNING PRESIDENT

YASSER ABU HILAHEH WROTE IN THE DAILY AL-GHAD ON NOVEMBER 4: "I WRITE TO THE PRESIDENT JUST FOR THE SAKE OF HAVING DONE MY BIT, KNOWING THAT HIS ADVISERS WOULD NOT UNEARTH MY ARTICLE AMONG THE PILES OF WHAT WILL BE WRITTEN, AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT FIND TIME TO SYNOPSISIZE AND TRANSLATE IT. WITH ALL MY PRAYERS FOR A MIRACLE THAT LEADS TO MR. BUSH'S DOWNFALL, I SAY TO HIM: `ARAB AND MUSLIM PEOPLE ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT YOUR REELECTION, THOUGH WE ARE CERTAIN THAT YOUR RIVAL, KERRY WOULD NOT BE BETTER IN DEALING WITH US. WE WANTED TO PUNISH YOU FOR THE ENMITY THAT YOU BEAR TOWARDS US, NOT TO REWARD YOUR RIVAL FOR THE ENMITY THAT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING HAD HE WON. SO WHAT ARE WE TO DO AFTER YOUR RE-ELECTION? THE PEOPLES WILL CONTINUE TO BURN YOU IN EFFIGY AND TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST YOUR POLICIES. OUR RULERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL BE EXTRA CAREFUL AND IMPLEMENT YOUR REFORM PROGRAM TO THE LETTER, BECAUSE THEY KNOW FULL WELL THAT YOU TOPPLED TWO REGIMES IN YOUR FIRST TERM."

-- THE BALANCE SHEET ON FOUR HARSH YEARS

JAMIL AL-NIMRI WROTE IN THE DAILY AL-ARAB AL-YAWM: "THE BETTER AND MORE EDUCATED AMERICA, LEADING NEWSPAPERS, THE EDUCATED, ARTISTS, ALL FOUGHT AGAINST BUSH; BUT IN THE END, IGNORANCE AND FEAR HAD THE LAST WORD. NOW WE HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE RIGHT-WING RELIGIOUS REACTIONARY WAVE THAT ANGERED THE WORLD, AND THAT IS FEEDING ANOTHER WAVE THAT IS ITS MIRROR IMAGE IN THE ARAB AND ISLAMIC WORLD. SO WHAT WILL OUR LEADERS DO? SINCE BUSH FEELS THAT THEIR REGIMES ARE UNDEMOCRATIC AND SHOULD REFORM, IN ORDER TO STOP BREEDING TERRORISM, LET THEM PICK UP THE CHALLENGE, INSTEAD OF PLEADING FOR UNDERSTANDING. LET THEM ALLOW DEMOCRACY TO HAVE ITS WORD; AND SINCE WE NEED TO PUT UP WITH WHATEVER AMERICAN BALLOTS PRODUCE, LET AMERICA DO THE SAME. WE DO NOT EXPECT A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THIS ADVICE, WHICH WILL BE ALL THE WORSE BECAUSE THE REGIMES WILL BE AL THE MORE STUCK BETWEEN AN ARROGANT AMERICAN POLICY AND AN ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED PUBLIC OPINION. THE RESULTS OF FOUR YEARS OF THIS SITUATION MAY BE UNPREDICTABLE.

-- BUSH'S VICTORY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

MOHAMMAD ABU RUMMAN WROTE IN THE DAILY AL-GHAD: "WHAT WE AS MUSLIMS CAN FEEL IN THE REELECTION OF BUSH AND ITS EFFECT ON AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IS THE DOMINANCE OF THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECT IN THE NEO-CONSERVATIVES' VISION AND ORIENTATION. THIS WAS POINTED OUT RECENTLY BY BRZEZINSKI WHO

DESCRIBED BUSH AND HIS TEAM AS APPEARING TO SEEK TO LEAD A HOLY INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST ISLAM, AND TO PORTRAY THE WARS AGAINST MUSLIM STATES AS CRUSADES. THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS IS NOT SURPRISING, GIVEN THAT THE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL MENTORS OF THE NEO-CONSERVATIVES ARE PEOPLE SUCH AS BERNARD LOUIS, SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, AND OTHERS WITH EXTREMIST VISIONS REGARDING ISLAM."

-- PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE SOLUTION ON THE PALESTINIAN FRONT

HUSSEIN ABOU RUMMAN WROTE IN THE PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY AL-RAI ON NOVEMBER 9: "THERE IS NO ROOM TO BANK ON THE AMERICANS OR EVEN THE EUROPEANS TO HELP US ACHIEVE PEACE ON THE PALESTINIAN FRONT. THE WHITE HOUSE WILL IMMERSE ITSELF IN THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT IT HAS A SPECIFIC AGENDA OF ITS OWN, WHICH WOULD BE INACCURATE SINCE IT WILL BE DRIVEN BY SHARON'S PLAN FOR A UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL, WHICH HE SEES AS THE END OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE, NOT THE START OF THE SOLUTION."

-- WHY WE ARE HAPPY WITH BUSH'S VICTORY AND KERRY'S DEFEAT

YASSER ZA'ATREH WROTE IN THE ISLAMIST WEEKLY AS-SABEEL ON NOVEMBER 9: "WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER IS THAT AN ENEMY WHO IS STUPID, WHO MAKES MANY MISTAKES, AND WHO MIRENS HIS COUNTRY IN MANY ADVENTURES HERE AND THERE THAT DISSIPATE ITS POWER, IS PREFERABLE TO A WISE ENEMY WHO PLAYS THE GAME INTELLIGENTLY. THIS IS WHY WE PREFERRED BUSH AND WHY WE ARE HAPPY THAT HE WON, WITH A CLEAR VICTORY, SO THAT HE MAY BE MORE CONFIDENT AS HE PERSISTS IN HIS POLICIES AND HIS ERRORS."